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ABSTRACT

The TIME Project was an effort to improve the access to and use of higher level vocational education and training among the black communities of Nottingham (England). The emphasis was on the city's community of African Caribbeans. This paper discusses the development of the TIME Project from the perspectives of a white academic community from the University of Nottingham, the university associated with the project, and a black community development worker. Their different perspectives reflect both an outsider's view of the situation of the African Caribbean community and the view of an insider. The paper's central argument is that the development of the TIME Project revealed new forms of racist practices that required project workers to rethink the scope of access programs in the African Caribbean community. These practices were new forms of racism in that they arose within contexts of policy and practice that did not exist until relatively recently and they were not primarily constructed around a racist ideology, either individual or collective. The processes and structures that have limited the lifelong learning opportunities of these African Caribbeans owe their existence to the dominant political discourses. The discourse of urban regeneration in Nottingham has shaped a context in which powerful local organizations are pursuing a strategic aim of dominance within a local training and education market. The absence of a black middle class with sufficient economic and political power to exert influence on its own community and on the mainstream providers of education is a key gap within the power matrices of social exclusion. It is important to recognize that access programs themselves are structured by discourses that can maintain exclusionary practices. (Contains 13 references.) (SLD)

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TIME for change - Life long learning and a black inner city community

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1.0 Introduction

The research discussed in this paper is based around the TIME Project[1] which set out to improve the take up of University based higher level vocational education and training amongst the black communities in Nottingham. To this end we developed an Open Learning Network made up of several University Departments, community organisations and local employers using a mixture of traditional methods and new technologies such as video-conferencing. We set out to provide enhanced career guidance, learner support and work placement opportunities for unemployed people from these local inner city communities. For a mainly American audience the relevance of our research on the relationship between a community of some 10,000 African Caribbeans and one of their local universities in a small city in the north of England may at first glance seem somewhat obscure. The TIME project's relevance to researchers and practitioners in the USA involved in continuing education lies as much in what our approach revealed about the present state of European and United Kingdom policy in this area than in studying the innovatory nature of the programme or the findings of the surveys we carried out in the course of the project.

In trying to change how the University's continuing vocational education provision related to the expressed needs of this 'socially excluded' community we brought together university based action researchers, community activists and development workers. Together this group has both theoretically and practically explored the limitations of their individual agency, as well as that of their colleagues and local communities. An exploration which has brought us butting up against the constraints and opportunities provided by the various cultural norms, policy frameworks and broad social discourses within which we found ourselves positioned. It is because similar policies on life long learning, community development and 'excluded' communities exist within the USA that our paper has more than just 'academic' relevance.

This paper is only one of a series of publications and materials[2] written for both community and academic audiences. We have attempted not only to relate our experiences to a wider audience but to ensure, in the jargon currently in vogue within the UK, that the 'capacity' we have created within the community to research its own needs and implement change is maintained and developed. This paper should therefore speak to communities who wish to change how they are served by their local university as well as university based practitioners.

This paper discusses our experiences in two different voices that of myself a white academic and Simon a black community development worker. It draws together our experiences by reflecting on how we both came to be involved in the TIME project, what we did together, and from my privileged position of the academic in the 'ivory tower on the hill', the different discourses and policies which shaped our experiences. A position which gives me the space from which to reflect on Simon's views on the role of racism in the experiences of the African Caribbean communities experience of life long learning, without having to deal with the pressures that this racism creates.

2.0 The Biographical Context of the Research

In keeping with our interest in the role of individual agency in promoting change we want to start by briefly setting out our individual perspectives on how we became involved in the TIME project.

The Academic's Tale

Two themes have run through most of my research i) a concern with what would now be called social justice, but I used to term equal opportunities, and ii) a commitment to action research. My origins as an educator though lie in my work as an inner city school teacher and youth worker. It was in these contexts that my personal commitment to equal opportunities

found its expression first in my own practice in then in my work with colleagues.

Working as a contract researcher in various University Departments for nearly ten years has given me only a limited opportunity to express the concerns and perspectives I developed while working within inner city communities. This is partially due to my 'junior' and unstable position within the University sector as a contract researcher, usually working on several short term contracts at a time. The institutional culture within which I presently work has also restricted my ability to pursue my interest in social justice issues. I was being generous I would describe it as 'monastic' in the sense of being inward looking, slightly self obsessed and, until recent management changes, concerned with more 'other worldly' activities than the life long learning needs of the inner city communities which lie two miles from its well manicured campus. To be more pejorative it is essentially a white middle class institution, encouraged by an official elitist agenda, to construct itself as one of the top ten research led universities in the UK, and to become an internationally recognised centre of excellence.

At present the University, like many others, is also faced with the need to raise increasing amounts of funding from non-traditional sources to not only fulfil its academic aspirations but also to cope with the impact of decreasing funding levels, brought about by recent central governmental reform of higher education. These two somewhat contradictory drivers of 'academic excellence' and 'income generation' have created tensions within the institution. An institution which metaphorically resembles a swan swimming upstream, serenely imperial above the surface while paddling furious beneath. Individual academics are presented with conflicting notions of their role, as both the 'traditional' academic engaged in scholarly pursuit of new knowledge as well as that of the 'entrepreneur' developing new revenue flows.

These were not the ideal institutional conditions for developing the TIME project with its domestic focus, its emphasis on curriculum development, and its intention to work within communities seen as both problematic and highly politicised. Personally though the opportunity to access European funding which could support our work came at a point where I had managed to create some space within the University to develop my own projects. I had become part of a broader groups of researchers concerned with a range of social justice issues, the Urban Programmes Research Group[3], and who had sufficient contacts to think of trying to change what was happening within our own institution and local community.

The Community Development Worker's Tale

Whereas Mark's interest in the relationship between main stream institutions and black communities stems from his lengthy experience as an inner city school teacher and youth worker in Nottingham I consider myself a 'new comer'. I relocated to Nottingham from London in 1995 and became interested in issues relating to the educational development of the African Caribbean community. My first interaction with mainstream educational institutions dealing with continuing education, primarily focussed on the African Caribbean community, was teaching on an access programme administered by a local further education college, although designed and delivered by a black community group[4], the African Caribbean Family and Friends (ACFF).

While teaching on ACFF's access programme I tried to influence the relationship with the college but failed, mainly due to the asymmetrical nature of the relationship. Although the community group could develop course materials, provide the teachers/lecturers/tutors they were prevented from accessing funding from the Further Education Funding Council due to its accreditation requirements. On the other hand independent accrediting bodies would not recognise the community group as an education centre. Thus the ACFF, and other community groups like it, had no option but to develop access courses acceptable to main stream institutions, even if they felt they did not meet the needs of the local community. The ACFF needed the partnership with the local colleges to ensure their continuity but had little control

over the courses they designed and delivered nor over the administration, including the funding of the programmes, in essence they were in a dependent relationship rather than equal partnership with the college.

Having little control over the course, and with the community group unwilling to break its dependent relationship, meant that the colleges agenda dominated. They wished to use the course to attract the unemployed, single mothers or mature adults they wanted to on their mainstream courses. The colleges agenda was so dominant there was no interest in providing a program that would encourage higher level learning within the community. My frustration at not being able to influence the nature of the relationship between the ACFF and the local college led me to discontinue teaching on the programme.

It was at this stage of my involvement with community development work that I became involved with the TIME Project. Prior to involvement with the Urban Programmes Research Group, I was already frustrated partly due to the inaccessible structures I was dealing with and also because I was considered an outsider (African) and a new comer to Nottingham. I saw the TIME project as an opportunity to have direct contact with the African Caribbean people and community organisations who were the beneficiaries of the Project. I hoped this would help me understand some of the issues affecting the community, the reasons for its apparent fragmentation, and the lack of any concerted approaches to issues of common interest. I was also hoping to be able to better understand the relationship between the two universities in Nottingham and the African Caribbean community.

3.0 The Local Communities' Experiences of Continuing Vocational Education

Simon and I started with our own perspectives on what was happening in Nottingham in terms of continuing vocational education and the African Caribbean community. In the following section we relate these different perspectives and in the next I offer my own academic synthesis by reference to the new forms of racism which appear to be operating within our local training and education market.

An Academic 'Outsiders' Perspective

The idea of the TIME Project was first aired in discussions between myself and community workers, from the local African Caribbean community. I had come into contact with these workers because I been working on a project looking at how young people could become more involved in developing youth policy, and it was these workers who had provided me with the contacts and help I needed in getting young people involved. Our conversations often turned towards what I would describe as the local vocational training and education 'market'. For the majority of the local community this market was dominated by the provision on offer by a small number of large further education colleges. The rest of the providers in the market were independent trainers and small training organisations, from both the private and voluntary sectors, funded on a course by course basis. The state of the market was of particular importance to the community workers because increasingly their organisations were providing training, students and facilities, it had become a considerable source of income for many of them.

Community organisations needed the funding from 'urban regeneration' activities such as the provision of vocational training, careers advice and recruitment services for the unemployed, because of the fall off in funding from the City Council. An impact of the 'capping' of local tax rates by Central Government. In the particular inner city wards in which the local African Caribbean population were concentrated there were at one time some fourteen community organisations offering a range of services for the unemployed. Day care nurseries kept their fees low by offering training for young mothers and carers. Youth clubs ran information

technology courses for school 'drop outs' to provided revenue to fund their youth workers.

This range of urban regeneration activities had come about because of the City Council's policies, the aggressive expansion of local further education colleges, as they have been released from local government control, and the role of Training and Enterprise Councils (TEC's)[5] in pushing forward the vocational training initiatives launched by the Thatcher government. The availability of increasing amounts of funds from the European Union, which has several initiatives which support urban regeneration activities[6], had balanced the drop off in local funding and allowed for a steady expansion of activites. This European funding though had to be matched by local funds, generally at the rate of some 50%. Community organisations have found it difficult to generate match funding, being small enterprises with low levels of income. They therefore had to seek it from other sources which tend to be the mainstream providers of training such as further education colleges or from the TECs. These 'partnerships' were generally based around specific projects with tightly defined outcomes and with funding dependent on the meeting of these targets. With both targets and outcomes determined by the policies of the European Union or the vocational training targets of the local TECs and Central Government local communities often felt they had little say over how the funds were spent.

My conversations with the community workers often turned to their worries about their partners. Concerns ranged from the punitive nature of the financial arrangements on which the training courses were sub-contracted to the management styles of local officials. The workers were keen to have these discussions because they lacked the support of a management structure which could provide adequate supervision and an opportunity to air their concerns. Also the University of Nottingham stood outside the micro-politics of this particular training 'market'[7] and so I was a safe outlet for their concerns

A Community Workers 'Insider' Perspective

"Society deliberately restricts African Caribbeans to the lower level of society"

One of the key issues that has been raised time and time again in the community is that social institutions are not genuinely interested in the positive development of African Caribbean people. While the European Union, TECs and the local City Council have provisions that appear 'inclusive', their eligibility criteria tend to be 'exclusive'. Both in terms of the match-funding requirement which affects the nature of programmes that can be funded and the targeting of programmes. The funding is disproportionately targeted towards the unemployed and single parents and focuses on low level training. The funding systems tend to be focus on programmes that reinforce the stereotypical representation of African Caribbean people, rather than on programmes which celebrate and encourage the positive aspects of the community. In other words, there is a conspiracy to hinder the positive development of African Caribbean people.

Since the death of Leroy Wallace, a community leader in Nottingham who had initiated changes and development within the African Caribbean community almost since its establishment there has been no one to take over his mantle. The fragmentation and lack of leadership within the community has had a number of negative consequences. The more fragmented a community is the weaker it is. It has hindered the community's ability to create a structure that will ensure that the African Caribbean needs are met. Fragmented groups produce different sets of leaders who compete against one another and who can be used to suppress the whole community. People believe that a fragmented African Caribbean community is desirable for the white society, since it is able to 'divide and rule'.

A commonly held view therefore is that white society is not sincere in its claimed interest in the positive development of African Caribbean people. A view given credence by the impunity

with which struggling African Caribbean community groups are usually closed down by funder, as when compared to white organisation with similar problems. However, the community still believes that a better educated generation will influence the educational achievements of its offspring, thereby not only bridging the gap between the older and younger generations of the African Caribbean community, but also bridging the social class between white and black society.

"University education is not aimed at African Caribbean people"

Whereas the African Caribbean community values education and educational qualifications, it is vocational education and qualifications which are the main areas of interest. This is based on the belief that you are more likely to get a job after a vocational training course than after a degree programme. Thus, the belief that university education is not for African Caribbean people. It is also argued that, even if one gets into university, the chances of getting good grades are dependent on a student's ability to conform to the expectations of society. The inability to access the employment market by those who have achieved university degrees and other higher qualification, have had negative impact on the number of younger African Caribbean people accessing university education. While in the early 1990's, a high percentage of young people took up university education with the belief that it will open doors to a better life for them, the reverse seem to be the case in recent times.

"Racism is responsible for unemployment and underemployment"

In Nottingham, as in the general trend within the British society, the causal factor for the high rate of unemployment among the African Caribbean community is considered to be racism. The high percentage of unemployment among the professionally skilled (with vocational certificates) and graduate/post-graduates among the African Caribbean community negates the belief that education is an enhancer of standards of living[8].

In our interaction and research with the local community we found a large number of unemployed graduates and postgraduate. Although we had a very limited number of places on the TIME Project' there were a high number of applicants for the sponsorship. The reasons for their interest in education, in spite of the levels of unemployment amongst graduates, is explained by one member of the community and a TIME beneficiary,

"Education is a better alternative to unemployment, moreover the certificate obtained could be useful one day if not in this society then in another (Caribbean)".

4.0 An Academic's Synthesis Of The 'Insider' and 'Outsider' Perspectives

Before moving on to look in detail at our practical responses to the issues we've both raised I want to take what I hope isn't too lengthy an academic detour to try and synthesize our two perspectives. To do this I want to unravel what I think are the key policies and social discourses in which we have both been positioned, and position ourselves. This unravelling started for me on my first reading of Simon's account when I kept being reminded of the phrase "Its the economy, stupid." Simon's section kept saying to me "Its racism, stupid.". I began to think that what we were seeing locally were new forms of racism, or possibly old forms re-invented and given new life, in the 'contract culture' of the 1990's. New forms of racism expressed in terms of who is targeted and what is provided for them, and in the relationships being created between the larger and smaller players in the education marketplace.

To understand how these new forms of racism came about I need to unravel how the two key policies of life long learning and community development, which provided the rationale for the TIME project, were being reconstructed in the local vocational training market, a market

dominated by the discourses of social exclusion and urban regeneration. First though I need to briefly explain what I mean by the terms 'reconstruction of policy' and 'discourse'.

Policy Reconstruction

The idea of policy reconstruction has its origins in Ball's (1992) theoretical construct of the 'policy cycle'. Ball uses the concept of 'cycle' to break away from seeing policy as being developed in one context and then implemented in another, in a linear top-down process. Rather Ball describes a series of cycles in which the process of development and implementation are linked and occur not only at the start of the policy process but throughout its life in the various contexts in which it is to have an effect. From Ball's perspective a policy is not developed in one context and implemented in another rather in each of the differing contexts in which a policy operates it has to be actively reconstructed or even recreated. For Ball policy,

"is not so much being implemented... as being recreated, not so much 'reproduced' as being 'produced'. ... The state control model (of policy development) is analytically very limited. Our empirical data do not suggests that the State is without power. But equally it indicated that power is strongly circumscribed by the contextual features of institutions, over which the State may find that control is both problematic and contradictory." (Bowe, Ball with Gold 1992 p 120)

If we take Ball's idea a step further then we shouldn't conceive of a policy cycle as simply being initiated within one context, for example within Central Government, which then triggers a cycle in another context, ie local government. Rather the relationship between different contexts is best conceived of as a series of interlocking policy spirals with the process of policy reconstruction being mutually and dynamically interactive between contexts. The idea of the policy cycle answers certain criticisms of the development/implementation model but raises several questions of its own. To what extent can a policy can be reconstructed in different contexts? All or only some of it? What shapes and constrains this process of reconstruction? In this paper I not going to even attempt to answer these questions by creating a 'causal map' of the influences which have shaped how life long learning and community development policies have been reconstructed locally. Rather I would like to adopt a much broader but sometimes more detailed brush to explore their development, and that is to use the idea of these polices being shaped by different sets of social discourses.

Policy Reconstruction Within Different Social Discourses

What do I mean by a social discourse?[9]. Social discourses are essentially dynamic networks of power which both shape a social context but which are also used by those within it. Powerful individuals and groups within a context do not therefore so much create discourses as appropriate and exploit them to legitimate their control. As discourses are not created purely by dominant individuals the forms of power that exist within them are not reducible to the work of individuals or groups. Power within a discourse is not therefore solely an expression of human agency but also of historical happen chance and 'events'. As the forms of power within a discourse range from the repressive to the liberating notions of struggle, resistance and conflict are fundamental aspects of every social context.

I've chosen to use the construct of policy cycles and social discourses because developing the TIME project brought myself, Simon and other workers into contact with the very same policies and discourses that shaped the local continuing vocational training market. The TIME project became our own act of policy reconstruction and resistance to a dominant social discourse, in the sense that we had to create a space within the market to develop an alternative approach to what was already happening.

My discussion of the local training market is therefore broadly based around the two policy strands of i) life long learning, specifically the continuing vocational education needs of the black inner city committees, and ii) community development particularly in relation to the growth and development of African Caribbean community organisations. Of the social discourses which shaped the reconstruction of these polices it was those of social exclusion and urban regeneration which we became most aware of as we tried to develop an alternative approach to meeting the needs of the local community. I want to start my exploration of the interaction, between these policies and discourses, from the starting point of a project manager and to do this by isolating two phenomena which shaped the TIME project almost from its inception.

"There are eight different types of money."

The TIME Project drew me into a labyrinthine funding system and I remember uttering the above quote as I tried to explain our financial management system to our French partners, who literally did manage their project on the back of envelope. In our context it took three University accountants to develop a completely new financial management system so that we could carry out the monitoring we needed to pacify our external auditors and help us cope with the flow of money from Europe. This in part reflected the inadequacies of our internal systems about also the difficulty of working with European funding. The money though was always late, we had to apply for it each year, although we were a three year project, it could be reduced if we failed to reach a specific target or a particular objective, it took three months to get a virement between expenditure headings agreed, and for three years after completion of the project we could be audited and have cash taken back. We soon began to share the paranoia of our colleagues in the community organisations who lived on this kind of money. We were haunted by the fear of not reaching an objective, making sure we didn't incur illegible expenditures and by the need to keep filling in the extensive financial monitoring forms. All of which are part of the warp and weft of the 'contract culture' which dominates so much of our work within education in the UK.

It may seem strange to start a discussion of the role of the social discourse of urban regeneration in shaping the reconstruction of community development policies with an account of financial procedures and funding issues. Assessing how powerful players within the vocational training market manipulated the funding regimes and financial processes to their advantage, increasing their room for manoeuvre and decreasing others, provided one of the more transparent means of understanding the discourses at play. The funding issues we encountered during the TIME project revealed what happens when you try to develop a life long learning project, based on the idea of supporting local communities to deal with their own problems, in a context shaped by a discourse of urban regeneration which had its origins in the Thatcher era. The European policy document which gave rise to the TIME project clearly set out its community development aims of supporting

> *"people-driven local strategies to combat discrimination in training and work that result from the rise in social tensions, racism xenophobia and anti-Semitism, create neighbourhood-based approaches especially in disadvantaged urban areas to exploit potential sources of jobs, promote the empowerment of the target groups, develop new models of access to a fill range of services and developing local grass roots capacities."* (European Commission 1997)

I first became aware of how this funding regime was being manipulated locally before I had even put the bid in for the Project. I was told. "You'll never get this project your charging four times the going rate for the training you are providing." As this was said by some one that who sits on one of the local boards which approves European projects I thought I'd better pay attention. I'd read the 127 page bid document closely and not seen any upper limit or even an average figure for the amount of money we could charge per hour of training, but now it

seemed I was bidding at four times the going rate.

I eventually discovered that the going rate was a quasi-official one, created in part by the local board to help the asses the 'value for money' of individual project proposals. What struck me though was how low a figure it was especially if you really were going to work with excluded groups, build up local organisations ability to work with you, develop 'innovative' programmes, and produce materials, all of which was a requirement of the bid document I was working to. I eventually discovered that the 'going rate' was a figure the large further education colleges applied to the courses they ran. They were able to work to this figure because of the economies of scale they operated with and because many of their innovative programmes were actually revamps of existing programmes. Unfortunately local community organisations couldn't make such economies of scale because of their size. In addition they were having to 'niche market' in those parts of the community which the mainstream providers couldn't easily access. The groups they were working with were therefore often more difficult, and therefore more expensive, to recruit and retain on courses.

If a community organisation did manage to get a project funded it then had to deal with all the complexities of the funding regime described earlier. The TIME Project did not face the single biggest problem encountered by local community organisations that of acquiring 'match' funding locally from public sources to balance the European funding the rest having to be raised. Finding this match funding was not a difficulty for us, in line with the other mainstream providers, because we could use our own resources, such as discounting our overheads or contributing under utilised resources , as in-kind contributions to the match funding elements. The need for match funding lies at the heart of the unequal partnerships that African Caribbean community organisations have developed with mainstream providers.

African Caribbean organisations experience particularly problems in generating their own match funding for both historical and contemporary reasons. In comparison with the rest of the voluntary sector black community organisations are small, relatively young and often not networked into larger groups. This reflects the history of many of them as essentially social clubs offering safe havens from a sometimes hostile host community during the last major waves of migration in the mid-fifties. To this day many are still run by a generation of voluntary managers who were involved in their inception. Many are now unattractive institutions for younger members of the black community whose needs have changed significantly from their parents' generation. This lack of new blood has limited their ability to network effectively with other organisations.

The increasing involvement of community organisations in activities such as urban regeneration and in the direct delivery of services has been termed 'communalisation' (McIntyre, 1995). The communalisation of provision represents for McIntyre a transfer of *"responsibilities and costs from government to communities ... activity is now 'dispersed' through such agencies which it now manages at arms length through the strategic policy framework and targeted funding regimes."* (McIntyre 1997). Communalisation was an adjunct to the Thatcherite approach to urban regeneration in which suspicion of local government and existing agencies led to an increasing number of centrally controlled Task Forces and Hit Squads. These initiatives often comprising of new partnerships between businesses, local communities and training providers were based on the premise that they could quickly target and turn round the most needy communities. The efficacy of these initiatives varied considerably but their legacy has been to help create the context within excluded community in which mainstream training providers and local funding agencies can manipulate funding sources such as the European Social Fund to their advantage. Within the social discourse of urban regeneration and it accompanying contract culture, or more accurately sub-contract culture, it has become difficult for 'bottom up' community development based policies such as that which funded the TIME Project to thrive.

What appears to be operating is less a case of 'communalisation' and more a case of 'colonialisation' by larger training providers and local funding bodies. They use the relative weakness of black community organisation within the local community to turn them into a cheap source of their 'raw materials'. By denying them the investment they need to become involved in more high profit activities they have effectively starved the community organisations of the money they need to develop their role in urban regeneration. Rather than supporting communities meet their own training and education needs by investing in their development the discourse of urban regeneration has allowed for the manipulation of the local markets so that community organisation are placed in positions of dependency on larger players in the marketplace. Black community organisations have found themselves having to act as gate keepers to their own communities to provide them with some degree of leverage with their more powerful partners. This has in some instances caused tensions between the local community and their own community organisations. It is here that we find the origins of Simon's conspiracy.

There is considerable room to resist this structuring of the local market. For example, a number of African Caribbean organisations are currently trying to create their own overarching structures on models developed in the other parts of the voluntary sectors. Similarly some City Councils have changes the scoring systems of their funding mechanisms to favour local community organisation over mainstream providers. New sources of European funds are now coming on stream which are specifically targeted to build the capacity in communities to becomes involved in community based economic development. The further education sector though is responding in its own way with a recent national review, the Kennedy Report (1997), putting forward the idea of colleges creating their own community based training centres, and therefore by-passing existing organisations. The conflict over who controls and determines the nature of the continuing vocational education and training on offer in excluded communities will continue.

ii) "Whatever you do don't mention education"

Throughout the TIME project we had difficulties with interpreting both the general ethos which underpinned the whole Employment Initiative, the part of the European Social Fund under which we were funded, as well as more detailed issues about how it specified what activities we could carry out, with whom and in what way. In part this was because of the way the initiatives was managed which was very much at arms length by Central Government who hired a private consultancy to administer the over 200 projects included in the Initiative. We received only one visit in three years from these consultants and so were left very much to our own devices to comprehend the mass of funding documentation we received. This lack of guidance was problematic in so much that we knew that we were involved in something which was not quite within the same world as our own, but could never clearly decipher the signs of what it was. It only became clear towards the end of the project that we were working with a somewhat different notion of life long learning to the official version being promulgated by the Department for Education and Employment, the UK ministry which managed the fund. Our reconstruction of the policy of life long learning was at variance to the 'official' view because as a University based team we were differentially positioned in the discourse of social exclusion.

How we re-constructed life long learning and how it was being 'officially' reconstructed operated at different levels. At the level of language, for example, these differences were faintly amusing. For example, we were not allowed to educate anyone they all had to be trained, all our publicity, reports and materials talked of training and trainees, when everyone new that our 'trainees' were enroled on Masters level courses at one of the more traditional University in the UK. But we were being funded to train not educate any one. From our University background the distinction that the funding body wanted to make between education and training became somewhat surreal, to the extent that I began to feel that the term higher level vocational training,

the category we used to describe our work, was in fact something of a contradiction in turn. We had to learn to speak about the project in differing ways in different contexts, with our funders it was training, with students and tutors it was about education, and inside our own Department we had to talk of this work as research in order to gain support for it. All of this created a sense of dishonesty and unreality as we were not able to articulate what we were about in our own terms, we lost our 'voice' in the jargon of the funding framework. This issue over language added to our sense of paranoia as we struggled to do and say the 'right thing'.

Our situation inside the University in terms of the external support on offer mirrored closely what would happen inside a small community organisation, although we had far greater internal support in terms of the financial and legal expertise we could call on. At the start of the project our own management had little to offer us and our relationships with the local African Caribbean community were relatively new and untested. We were further isolated by the closure of several of the African Caribbean organisations that had agreed to work with us, because a whole tranche of funding had come to an end a number had gone out of business. In this kind of vacuum a projects tend to go 'native'. Effectively what happens is that two or three key workers are faced with having to create an agreed view on what their project should look like, how it should operate, and who with. These workers will either draw on their own norms or those that surround them. In our case we drew on the discourse of professional development which shaped our work on life long learning at the University. Luckily these norms were already being reinforced by our consultations with local community organisations who wanted to develop higher level learning in the community and so pressed us to ensure that this happened.

We came into direct conflict with our funders not on an issue of language but when we started to challenge the dominant views on what was the best method of providing access to the courses at the University for members of the African Caribbean community. Certain approaches and methods had almost iconic status in the eyes of the funders, hence distance learning was by its very nature a good thing and approached uncritically. On consulting closely with the community it soon became clear that those we were working with wanted access to the professionals who attended the 'normal' courses at the University. They rejected the idea of a special course for unemployed people, they felt that this would isolate them further, they wanted the chance to make contacts and network. Similarly they did not want a purely distance based programme, although we had the technology to explore different distance learning options they shared a perception that we were keeping people 'at a distance'. The distance learning technology we used provided a door into the University but it was one which people soon wanted to pass through. What our funders found hard to understand was that the technology was not neutral it has a very different meaning for a professional lawyer sitting in their office and an unemployed black graduate sitting in a local community centre.

We began to realise that the funders criticisms of our approach to providing greater access to life long learning opportunities was not based on a commitment to certain technologies or even a particular view of what constituted 'access' rather it arose out of the dominant discourse of social exclusion. We became aware of the strength of this discourse, and the norms around which it is based, when we were eventually visited by a representative from the private consultancy which managed the Employment Initiative. Within a generally positive visit there was one serous concern over our project, this was about who we were targeting. We were told by the representative that we should be working with more 'difficult cases' that the students we were working with were not sufficiently 'socially excluded', as many had University degrees.

Now the Employment Initiative is relatively clear that it is targeted on excluded groups , *"the long term unemployed, jobless, single parents, the homeless, itinerants, gypsies and travellers, prisoners and ex-pris ers, substance abusers....migrants, refugees and other similarly vulnerable groups, who are likely to be faced with greater discrimination in the labour market, as a consequence of the rise in social tension, racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism."* (1997

p.1).

We viewed social exclusion as a process rather than as a group of individuals to be targeted. Social exclusion as a process could affect people throughout their lives. European life long learning policies recognised that this processes can operate at even the highest levels of training and eduction. The White paper which in many ways gave rise to the Employment Initiative stressed this,

"In most European systems, paper qualifications are designed to filtering out at the top the elite which will lead administration and companies, research and teaching staff....It could be that society 'locks out' in this way much talent which is frequently unconventional but innovatory and that it therefore produces an elite which is not truly representative of the available human resources potential. This point of view is borne out by a number of recent surveys which show that over a long period the more elitist types of training are more often than not the prerogative of the upper managerial or intellectual strata." (European Commission 1995 p. 11)

I was particularly shocked by this view that our students were not deserving enough first because we there was strong empirical evidence of continued high levels of unemployment amongst black graduates (Shire 1995) in Nottingham but also because this 'advice" was offered in a University in which many Departments had no black staff and the majority of courses no black students from the local community. In this context black students were already seen as difficult students, and so it did not see a particularly good management of change strategy to introduce only the most difficult cases in to the University system. I could not understand why the obviously bright and critical women from our funders had made this particular observation.

I began to think that the origins of the external consultant comments reflected the way her views and work had become positioned within the dominant discourse of social exclusion. The definition used by the UK government's new co-ordinating body, the Social Exclusion Unit, encapsulates this dominant view of social exclusion, *"individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environment, bad health and family breakdown."*. From this perspective social exclusion denotes a category of individual from a growing 'under class' (Bradley 1996) rather than seeing exclusion as a process which can affect individuals throughout their life. Within the dominant discourse social exclusion arises from the view of the UK as a 40/30/30 society in which the top 40% of the society have job security while the bottom 30% experience prolonged periods of unemployment interspersed with short periods of poorly paid insecure work. This is an analysis which reflects the growing discrepancy between the better and poorer off within UK society which began to widen in the Thatcher years for the first time this century and which does not at present appear to be narrowing. Hence she wanted us to target more excluded groups, if an individual had a degree from her perspective they were not excluded, irrespective of whether they were the targets of racism in the labour market or workplace.

The official discourse of social exclusion comes from the top 40% of society who appear ill at ease in relation to the other 60% of society. The term social exclusion although originating in Europe has gained ground in the UK partly because 'under class' was seen as a pejorative and isolating term, and partially because New Labour tends not to want to use the term class or involve itself in social class analysis. The dominant discourse has even draw in the Higher Education sector who are also now to help build an inclusive learning society

"To increase knowledge and understanding for their own sake and to foster their application to the benefit of the economy and society; to serve the needs of an adaptable, sustainable, knowledge-based economy at local, regional and national levels; to play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilised, inclusive society." (Dearing 1997 Chapter 5 p. 3)

The impact of this official discourse of socially exclusion has been to create a restricted notion of life long learning for all but the top 40%. Here we have the origins of Simon's belief that white society wants to restrict the ambitions of the black community. If the African Caribbean community is an excluded community then the logic of the official discourse requires the reconstruction of life long learning policies, which target it, as the provision of 'second chance' opportunities aimed at over coming the multiple form of deprivation individuals have suffered.. Evidence of this particular reconstruction of life long learning can be seen in recent Central Government initiatives such as the proposed 'Individual Learning Accounts' and the New Deal. A million Individual Learning Accounts are to be set up and with an initial sum of £150 being donated by Central Government but this is to be spent only on training and education which is below degree level. Similarly the recent Welfare to Work Initiatives, the New Deal, will provide work placements and training but again this will be restricted in level.

Meanwhile the construction of life long learning policies within the discourse of professionalism and the lives of, mainly white, professionals is taking a very different direction. In the case of a profession such as teaching life long learning as continuing professional development requires ,

"the cultivation of informed understanding, judgement and 'voice', . This style of professionalism may be essential for the best of our national arrangements to be transformed ....Here, the inner knowledge, judgement and wisdom of the professional teacher is seen as one of the greatest resources available... As such they must be nurtured and enriched through CPD courses." (Dadds 1997, p. 32)

A long way from second chance programmes. The source of our confusion about the Employment Initiative is that our reconstruction of life long learning was shaped by a discourse of professionalism not social exclusion. We therefore wanted to give access to the kinds of learning experiences professionals experienced, while the Department of Employment and Education had something rather different in mind

New Forms of Racism

We've basically argued that the reconstruction of two sets of policies within different dominant discourses has created new forms of racism. The discourse of urban regeneration has crated the social context in which the larger players in training and education markets are able to colonise its weaker members by the manipulation of funding frameworks and the bidding process. The colonisation of African Caribbean community groups has resulted in the reconstruction of community development policies in ways which maintain much of their dependency. The structural disadvantages African Caribbean organisations face within these market place limits their ability to take part in their own economic development.

The re-construction of life long learning as a 'second chance' policy when applied to the African Caribbean community is the second form of racism which lies at the heart of Simon's account. This limited notion of lifelong learning becomes an expression of a new form of racism not only because it fails to recognise the plurality of black experiences and needs but also because in a society increasingly structured around learning or knowledge relationships a lack of access to lifelong learning at all levels needs to recognised as a form of social exclusion. The increasing importance of accessing new forms of 'fundamental' knowledge, especially with the speed at which knowledge becomes redundant within employment, means that accessing life long learning opportunities is now a requirement, rather than a 'second chance' to catch up with lost opportunities. There is already evidence within the professions that black workers are less likely to access in-service training than their white colleagues (Clarke and Fraser 1997). The presence of barriers to accessing appropriate 'life long learning', whether in a formal educational settings such as a University or via experiential learning on a New Deal work placement, are now being added to the list of concerns the black community has

traditionally held about the way in which the education and training systems have failed to meet their needs.

5.0 The TIME Project as a Response to the Local Vocational Training Market

In this penultimate section we want to set our practical response in the form of the TIME project and consider the efficacy of some the approaches we have used, before we finish with a summative evaluation of the project and how it needs to progress in the future.

My initial conversations with the community workers may never have moved on from their concerns about other training and education institutions, rather than questioning the Universities responsibility towards the community, if it had not been for the recent expansion in Higher Education (HE) provision in the UK. The sector has undergone a dramatic increase in size, the number of eighteen year olds studying in HE has increased from approximately one in twelve to one in four. Although the overall percentage of ethnic minority graduates has not increased dramatically over the period of expansion overall numbers have. There was now a local issue, the growing problem of unemployed black graduates, which brought the University into the scope of the community's concerns over training and education. Here was an issue I started to think I could do something about.

For these unemployed graduates funded continuing education opportunities were limited. A small number of places were available on Masters and postgraduate courses at both of the two local universities, and in nearby cities universities were starting to offer schemes directly targeting unemployed graduates and providing them with help in finding work experience. In general though the courses on offer were often specifically designed courses, such as one year full time courses in ergonomics, funded by Europe and aimed mainly at the unemployed. The small number of places on offer, and the fact that students had little choice of what they could study, often meant that people attended them because they were free rather than because they fitted in with their career aspirations. Often the unemployed there was a lack of progression.

Initially I and the community workers were unsure of what the University could do. The initial idea of how we could cooperate were based on the kinds of partnerships they had with the further education colleges. These models were not unworkable but either placed the community organisation in the position of either being the site of some kind of access programme, which would unlikely to benefit them greatly as in the main University staff would have had to be employed to run them, or were little more than room hire agreements in which we would hire their facilities. This is not to say that they did not have alternative ideas but they had little experience of working with a university, or even conceptualising how one worked.

The workers were also concerned to do more than just run 'another course'. They had a broad agenda for change; shifting the power relationships between themselves and their funders and parents more in their favour, widening the type of provision on offer in their organisations, and overcoming the impact on the how the community was perceived by the emphasis they had placed on working with the most excluded members of their community. There was a sense that the organisations provision was adding to the labelling process of this community as one which experienced 'problems' with training and education, even though the most recent census (1991) showed that in the wards we were working in 13.8% of the ethnic minority pop. obtaining qualifications above 'A' level/Diploma compared to 11.2% for the 'white' population. The community workers wanted to see higher level learning going on in the community to counter balance the negative image of the black communities training needs that their own organisations were adding to.

We therefore began to develop a project which we felt would provide us with sustainable, and

critical, relationships with this community an which would meet with their aspirations about life long learning. There were two obvious levels at which we could work, and we began to assess how each of these could contribute to developing the kind of sustainable relationship we sought. The TIME project's activities can be grouped under two broad headings;

- researching the continuing vocational education needs/experiences of the local African Caribbean and Asian communities.
- supporting students from the black community directly onto programmes at the two local universities by developing a community based Open Learning Network

'Researching' the continuing vocational education needs of the local community

Probably the most traditional way we could have worked with the local community would have been to objectify the 'training market' in the inner city by making it the focus of a range of research projects, from policy analyses through to evaluations of individual programmes. We decided though not to take this traditional option, preferring instead to develop a more engaged role with the local community by developing their ability to research issues for themselves and setting our own research within a broader spectrum of action and intervention within the community. This we felt was the only way of developing a research strand to our work which would resist the wider spread criticism of much research in black communities (Leicester 1993) that it fails to move on from a broad recognition of a problem to actually supporting change. We therefore built up a team of African Caribbean and Asian researchers who would be given the opportunity to carry out their own projects as well as take part in a survey we wanted to carry out about the lifelong learning needs of the local black communities.

The researchers' positions as 'go-betweens' between the University and the local community created both personal and professional tensions as one black worker recounted,

"I was unprepared for both how people saw me as a researcher and the tensions I felt talking to people as a researcher. There were two major reactions resulting from my presence/performance as a researcher.

First, I was surprised by the treatment I received once I had given people information on the TIME Project and the role I was playing on behalf of the University. For example, as I now worked for the University my credibility had risen and I began to be given the status of an 'expert' - whenever I had something to say it was accepted, I must be 'right'. This reaction threw me back to my own experiences in challenging my parents', and seemingly the whole of their generations', attitudes towards authority. In this generation there was a prevailing attitude that anyone in authority, generally white and a professional, must be right. Now I was being presented with an image of myself which challenged my previous reactions, because I, a black woman, was now the 'expert'. This, coupled with my existing apprehensions about working at the University proved difficult to reconcile.

At the University a certain air of expertise gave me a black women some space in which to operate, in an institution in which people would still comment to me during a typical rainy British summer "You must be missing the sunshine?". If the air of being an expert gave me some room to manoeuvre in the University in the eyes of the community the image of me as an 'expert' resulted in a distancing which closed down the space in which I could work. A generation after I had been criticising the actions of my parents for uncritically accepting the views of white experts I was now having to think challenge my own generations reactions to a so called black 'expert'."

Developing a community based Open Learning Network

To build up a more equal relationship with the local community we needed to avoid many of the criticisms directed at other funded courses for the unemployed. The first criticism we had encountered were that courses generally offered what providers wanted to provide not what people wanted. We decided not to develop a specific course onto which we would recruit students. Rather through our contacts with local training and careers guidance organisations our plan was to i) quickly identify groups who wanted to attend the same type of course, ii) recruit the Departments they wanted to study at on to the Project, iii) provide the support they needed to work on a 'normal' programmes run by the University by developing a community based Open Learning Network and then iv) extend the curriculum so that it met more fully with their needs.

The decision to target students and work from what they wanted to do rather than to create a specific course determined the rest of our approach. It meant that we couldn't develop new structures in every Department so we adopted a two prong strategy. First we decided that within the University our work would concentrate on achieving cultural change within the Departments and second we would make structural changes by developing the relationship between these Departments and the local community.

Bird (1995) observes that traditionally curriculum development with regards to black students in HE *"often does not focus on cultural issues rather than structural ones"* (p. 27). The biggest changes we had to work on were the Departments self definitions as part of an 'elite' organisation. A common response to our approaching a Department to be involved in the project reflected this self definition; *"We don't think there is much point in us trying to work with you as we are concentrating on students with 2:1 degrees.", "Our course are focussed on senior management.", "I don't think there will be sufficient numbers of students from that community"*. Besides the racist connotations that no one of the local black community could have acquired a 2:1 degree and still be unemployed there was an implicit association being made by people in the Departments between ESF funding, unemployed people, the black community, low levels of education, and students who were difficult cases. Helping the 'disadvantaged' did not fit in with the self constructs of lecturers on 'elite course'. So we focussed our work on issues of who they saw as their customers, making them aware of the availability of external funding, and viewing the TIME Project as an opportunity to experiment with a range of new technologies. We therefore used the new technology as a form of high tech form of entryism.

The structural changes the TIME project set out to achieve were to be based around an Open Learning Network within the community. This Network would replicate in the community the kinds of structural changes that an individual Department might try and make to improve access to their courses. The network was based around five organisations all of whom would have a distinct role. One community organisation which had on-street premises was our initial point of contact within the community, it also offered careers guidance and help with applications. A local youth club with a large training facility provided the social support, we took over one of its training rooms and created a place to study away from their homes, with IT equipment, photocopying facilities, and with day care and a restaurant on site. The local Further Education College provided learner support and the University the academic input. We also recognised that biggest single disadvantage the our student faced was that they were unemployed and as they were studying on vocational programmes they lack support from work colleagues, access to certain resources and a chance to practice new skills and carry out practical assignment. We therefore expended the original network to include employers who could provide work placements.

The network was 'hard wired' using ISDN based video-conferencing technology, which also allowed for e-mail and INTERNET facilities. The technology had a number of roles within the

project. As part of the learning network for the students it meant they could receive learner support at a rage of sites, take pace in virtual work placements, and experiment with accessing tutorial, seminars and lectures at a distance. For the workers on the project and in the community organisations it was used for a variety of a project management tools. Possibly its greatest single value in terms of working with some of the Departments was that it changed their view of our project, seeing it as an opportunity to gain experience and evaluate one of the newer distance learning technologies.

The setting up and maintenance of the network was the physical incarnation of our desire to create more sustainable relationships with the local community. We hoped that in the longer term that we could develop a community based resource which could provide additional learner support, work placement management, careers advice etc for a whole range of programmes in different institutions. This community resource would provide a bridge with the higher education sector.

How we 'built-in' the capacity for community organisations to work with us was the key to creating relationships which could go on beyond the end of the Project. The lower risk option would have been for the Project team to recruit a researcher to work in the community organisations. The problem with this approach is that it leaves nothing behind once the project ends, as at that points so does the worker, and it means that the expertise and experiences gained accrue to the Project and not the community. If we want to sustain our relationships with these organisations we needed to ensure that that expertise was left with them. We therefore decided to adopt a strategy of getting the organisations themselves to select people who we would then fund. For the Project team this was a higher risk option because we would have less control over the selection and management of the workers, who were often already employed by the organisations on a part-time basis. The limited choice of people from which we could recruit also meant that we had to increase the amount of support and training on offer and these were significant additional costs.

The biggest problem we faced was the day to day management of workers who initially found it difficult to cope with the very different management styles they experienced between the University and the community organisations and the way in which their jobs were defined, most were moving form a culture of detailed job description, set times, and established working patterns. They found it hard to cope with the relative freedom we gave them and the emphasis on it being their responsibility to find ways of making things work. Once they had become accustomed to our way of working they then found difficulties in accommodating both styles. Real difficulties were avoided by keeping in regular contact with their managers inside the organisations.

Once the network was established we needed to start to move both ideas and people around it. Here the video-conferencing system was invaluable, its key advantage was the that it allowed both 'one to one' communication and more importantly 'one to many' conferences. In these one to many conferences workers could exchange ideas and build up commitment to ideas and plans. At first the flow of activity was mainly to and fro from the University to the other institutions. With the University acting as a hub we were able to monitor activity and encourage interaction but to be fully functional as a network we wanted to achieve more decentralise communications. To achieve this end we had to create a number of 'artificial' activities to get things going and to legitimate the use of the technology for other activities beyond the project.

We also had to learn to understand the different work loads that individuals and organisations could cope with and when their busy and quieter times were, not as easier a task as one would imagine. Workers varied in their ability to assess their work loads, control them and prioritise activities. The technology allowed us to discuss these issues with groups insides organisations as well as make judgements about stress and activity levels through the direct observations of work places and the general discussion we could have with not only our contact person each

organisation but also other workers.

In creating the Open Learning Network we developed a number of important insights;

- The need to plan strategically in order to synchronize the development of a project with the cycles of expansion and contraction which often affect small organisations
- Developing the capacity of organisations to take part in a project needs to be done so that as much capacity as possible is left behind within the community at the end of a project
- Bridging the gap in management cultures requires dealing with the stresses it places on the individuals who span this gap, as well as their managers.
- Developing an understanding of the different paces of work and periods of high activity in the organisations within the network, and techniques to monitor them.

6.0 Developing the TIME Project

If we are not to become just another short term project then we now have to move forward. Within contract culture sustainable relationships are those that can be continually remade and re-created in different forms and guises. In this section we both talk about how we see this happening.

The Contract Researcher's Way Forward

Our presence in the community and our stated interest in supporting local organisations has led to a number of requests to join in projects some research orientated other more concerned with new training initiatives. The problem we face is that often these requests lie outside both our scope of interest and expertise, as the community has a broader agenda than we have. Our problem now is that if we continue to reject ideas and partnership we will soon acquire a reputations for only being interested in our own projects.

We recognised fairly soon on in the project that getting involved in 'bids' for new projects dominated our dialogue not only because the University was perceived as wealthy organisation and hence a potential source of funds but also because this was in one sense the language in which they were used to talking with larger organisations, we were in danger of just becoming another 'funder'. We now need to learn how to communicate with each other both more informally and in a more focussed way terms about the work we want to do with the local community. Our first response to this is to start to produce both training materials and research reports directed at local organisations. Hence we have recently commissioned research on work placement opportunities in local firms which explored the role that community organisations could take in managing and supporting this. More informally we have started to put together a group of community workers prepared to discuss their work and the community with people from selected parts of the University. What we hope to do with this group is create a space in which we can move beyond the culture of bidding, blame, and micro-politics and start to explore commonalities and differences in perceptions, understandings and intentions and in doing so move on our relationship with the local community from its more instrumental beginnings to a more critical and creative phase.

The Community Activist's Viewpoint

The TIME Project saw one of the local universities establishing a direct relationship with the local African Caribbean community. This relationship involved the provision of not just courses, but also, financial and academic support to ensure that students accessed the programmes they wanted and the community benefited. The TIME Project is seen, as a

positive step in the right direction, however, it needs to be developed further for its aims and objectives to be fulfilled. The view from the community is that, while the Project offered opportunities, the choice of courses was limited. Moreover, the time span and criteria (unemployment, single/lone parents) for eligibility were restrictive. While there are graduates who could have accessed the MA and MBA programmes, but because they were in underemployed jobs, they were therefore disqualified. Also, the fee provision (limited to one year on part-time) and other support available were inadequate.

To develop the Project further and deal with these problems, the scope of the Project needs to be expanded to cater for the life long learning needs of all the community and the urban regeneration programmes emphasised by the local councils and the EU. In essence, the relationship between the universities and community groups should be different form the asymmetrical relationship with local further education college. The TIME Project could be further developed to provide more access to non-vocational learning at higher levels with direct impact on the community.

The TIME Project should play the role of a partner to community groups to enable them access funds either from the EU, TEC, Local councils or even the Higher Education Funding Council. This could be done by the Project becoming a partner in community development via offering specialist knowledge, credibility and access to education and employment, while the groups provides space within the community, publicity for the universities and help the universities deal with the 'exclusive' image it has within the community. This relationship, it is hoped will encourage funding organisation to deal directly with the local communities and encourage the pursuit of education in the community while 'shading' the negative image associated with the African Caribbean community as a problematic community to work it.

The community envisage that a relationship of this nature will side step the current influence colleges have over community development and will force local government to deal with local the communities on their terms. The provision of a central focus by the TIME may provide a temporary solution to the issue of fragmentation and lack of leadership.

"White society will no longer be able to use one group against another in its attempt to dominate the African Caribbean community."

Summary

The central argument of this paper is that the development of the TIME project revealed to us new forms of racist practices which required us to re-think the scope of access programmes within Africa Caribbean communities. The practices we found were 'new' forms of racism in two senses, i) they arose within contexts of policy and practice which simply did not exist until relatively recently, and ii) they were not primarily constructed around either an individual or collective racist ideology. The development of the processes and structures which limited the life long learning opportunities of this community, and maintained the dependency of African Caribbean organisations, owed their existence less to how individuals reconstructed key policies but rather the way in which these policies were shaped by different dominant discourses. It is these dominant discourses, matrices of power relationships which owe their existence and maintenance to both the agency of individuals and the happen chance interaction of historical 'eventsí, which provide for the non-ideological basis of the racist practices we encountered.

The two main discourses discussed within the paper, 'urban regeneration' and 'social exclusion', do not have as their primary target the black inner city communities organisations or the black undergraduates we worked with. Rather what the discourse of urban regeneration has done is to shape a context in which powerful local organisations are pursuing a strategic aim of dominance within a local training and education market. These organisations use a range

of techniques to manipulate the funding regimes that underpin much of this market to their advantage, and subsequently disadvantage the local community organisations. The resulting 'colonialisation' of black community organisation by institutions such as further education colleges is a technique which arises out of their desire for dominance, their ability to influence the local funding mechanisms and the historical development of these organisations. The further education colleges did not have, or appear not to have had, initially at least a desire to colonise these organisations.

The matrices of power relationships which has resulted in the colonialisation of certain African-Caribbean Community Organisations have now in one sense given rise to an ideological viewpoint which could be said to be racist. In that certain professionals within larger statutory organisations now perceive black organisations as unable to manage themselves. That what might be called the 'politics of conflicts' have so shaped back community activists approach to white organisations that they cannot do 'business' with these organisations. (While Asian community activists are more commonly perceived as being able to work in a business like a manner and therefore dominate the involvement of ethnically defined community organisations in the local training market). The key point to be made is that the origins of these views is from within a structured discourse of urban regeneration and community development which has 'set up' black organisation to fail, the ideologies follow from this structuration, they do not create it.

The construction of black communities, from within the discourse of socially exclusion, also contains within it a racist ideology in the sense that it fails to understand or recognise the multi-politically of black identities and experiences, and is therefore is own form of stereotyping. It also reflects the broader process of the de-racialisation of policies that started to occur within the Thatcher era. The discourse of social exclusion though reflects a wider set of strategies and technologies and it is from within these that such stereotypes and omissions emerge.

The discourse of social exclusion can trace its origins in part back to European policies that set out to identify a whole range of processes which excluded individuals from the cultural, material and social benefits of society. These processes were originally described in terms of a range of process from the specifics of drug abuse and criminal activity to the broader issues of racism and poverty. Within the UK this original policy agenda has became reconstructed, at the level of Central Government at least, so that it concentrates not upon the process of exclusion but upon the groups which have been excluded. This occurs in part because during the development of the Europe policy framework in the UK the whole Thatcherite agenda was creating a context in which the gap between the poorest and the wealthiest in the society was widening, for the first time in decades. This meant that in fact one of the key processes of social exclusion was official government ideology and policy. The creation of an 'underclass', by this widening gap, or probably more accurately the recognition of such a class, has meant that social exclusion has become focussed upon, and indeed synonymous with this 'bottom' group.

The terming of the most extremely deprived groups within society as 'the' socially excluded has led to the targeting of policies by multiple deprivation models, and a cut off point in the support on offer when groups are not sufficiently 'socially excludedí. Although those that fall outside of the multiple deprivation model may well suffer from many of the processes suffered by those who are 'officially' excluded, and many even to greater extent than those who are presently excluded. In a tragic reversal of the Thatcherite distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor we now have those who are multiply excluded and those who are simply excluded.

This dominant reconsrtucion of of social exclusion policies is creating problems for communities 'of interest'such as the black community, particularly with reference to the way in which training and education policies such as life long learning, which is the major response of

New Labour to social exclusion, are being reconstructed. The strategy of targeting, and the attendant technology embedded in output based funding formulas, mean that only very small parts of their community receive help, although the community as a whole is affected by racism in terms of both its overall educational achievement and employment.

From within the African-carribean community this is perceived as having detrimental short and a long term impacts. In terms of the life long learning opportunities the community itself can offer it leads to an over emphasis on low level training and second chance programmes, which adds to the view of the community as an educational 'problem'. It creates a ceiling in terms of the help on offer so that we see many unemployed black graduates on courses and programmes way below their educational level. An unemployed graduate may attend a low-level programme to avoid the even poorer training experiences they may have to attend to maintain their social security benefit. Recently in Nottingham a number attend a course supposedly targeted at those who had ëdropped out ë of education because it provided the opportunity to build and own their own PC. In the longer term an impression is created that white society is prepared to only help black community so far and just as they start to reach parity, and therefore set out to challenges for resources and jobs, it removes this support. Even longer term this failure to enter professional level jobs will delay even further the establishment, locally and nationally, of a black middle class.

The absence of a black middle class with significant economic and political power to exert influence on both is own community and the mainstream providers of education is a key gap within the power matrices of social exclusion. Locally within Nottingham the lack of community leadership means that effectively there is no means of challenging the way in which life long learning polices are being reconstructed with regards the African Caribbean community. A challenge which has occurred within Communities in local cities such as Derby and Bradford where local business people and professional have both re-vamped the management of local community organisations and provided an economic and political power base from which to challenge the dominant players in market.

What use then is this kind of analysis mean for anyone considering the development of a local access program? In the context of the UK it means we have to re-think the emphasis of these programmes. In the TIME project we set out to not only change the structure and culture of the University Departments we worked with but also to increase the capacity of the local community to engage critically with the University by developing an Open Learning network. The Open Learning Network not only provided local community groups with the ability to engage with us but we have left that expertise behind in the community, and have continued to support it by the development of a team of Africa Caribbean researchers. These researchers are now attempting to challenge the policy agendas of the University and the local funders and are instrumental in setting up a Centre of Excellence within the community which has the stated aim of supporting its higher level learning aspirations. In the UK we need to recognise more explicitly that access programmes themselves are structured by discourses which will not only give rise to racist ideologies but also maintain the exclusion of these communities. Any access programme that does not recognise this and does not extend its remit beyond challenging the reconstruction of local policies to directly dealing with these matrices of power will eventually become part of the problem not part of the solution.

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1. Further details of the TIME Project can be found at its WWW site at http://acorn.educ.nottingham.ac.uk/time

2. Further publications can be ordered from the WWW site

3. The Urban Programmes Research Group is a group of researchers and lecturers committed to working with inner city communities and ensuring that their voices are heard within the policies and interventions which are targeted at them. The Group has a wide range of current projects funded locally and from Europe more details of which can be found at its WWW site, http://acorn.educ.nottingham,ac.uk/SchEd/res/uprg.htm

4. I designed the Contemporary African History course on behalf of the Association of African Caribbean Family and Friends (ACFF) Study Centre which had an existing contractual agreement with Clarendon College a local further education college to administer the group's courses.

5. Each area in the UK has a TEC which are private companies but receive most of their income from central government to develop the vocational training on offer in an area by directly commissioning training courses, and a range of other services such as careers guidance. The TEC's grew out of the Thatcher governments suspicion of the present education and training system, and their belief that an organisation whose management and ethos was more private than public sector orientated were need to develop vocational training. The TEC's are funded on a output related funding formula if they fail to reach their targets then their

money is reduced. One of the local TECs in Nottingham has under performed over recent years and suffered redundancies as a result. Relationship between TEC's and training providers are often fraught and recent funding changes have exacerbated these problems.

6. Initiatives such as the European Social Fund, European Regional Development Fund, Single Regeneration Budget, The Urban Initiative. A plethora a funding opportunities each with their own specific funding formulas and targets.

7. Traditionally out of the two local universities Nottingham University has been the least concerned over responding to the training and education needs of the local community. In contrast the other local university had evolved out of a group of technical colleges which had historically recruited more locally and from a much broader range of students

The University of Nottingham has basically constructed itself as an elite organisation, it regularly appears in the top ten of the various rankings of UK universities, in undergraduate terms its is one of the most popular university in the country, with an application to places rate of 10:1, in research term it claims to be one of the top research universities out side of Oxbridge and London, and it has recently initiated a controversial 'redundancy' scheme in pursuit of '5 ratings' in all its Departments. In this institutional context it is not surprising that those involved in providing continuing vocation education position themselves in a highly competitive market, with 7 other HEI's in a 50 mile radius, as providing 'high' status courses, and their marketing and recruitment strategies reflect this.

8. A recent survey of the local African Caribbean community (ref) found that

9.

The particular view of discourse I endorse in this papers stresses

i) The notion of discourse as, in part, a temporary and dynamic network of power. Which recognises that discourses both shape the nature and forms of power which are displayed within a social context but which are also appropriated by the powerful to legitimate their exercise of control.

"The State is superstructural in relation to a whole series of power networks that invest the body, sexuality. The family, kinship, knowledge, technology and so forth ..... but the meta-power (of the State) with its prohibitions can only take hold and secure its footings where it is rooted in a whole series of multiple and indefinite power relations that supply the necessary basis for the negative forms of power." (Foucault Truth and Power p. 122)

ii) There are multiple forms of power within these networks includes those forms which are liberating or empowering as well as those which are repressive. Discourses as networks of power not only 'allow' for the notion of resistancebut by their very composition stress the inevitability of struggle and resistance. This means understanding the positive forms of power at play as well as the negative, this is Foucault's microphysics of power

"It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process through which ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which the force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another..." (Foucault 1980 p.92)

iii) All of these various forms of power within the network are not reducible, or traceable, to individual, or group, actions. The forms of power at play within these networks are not solely

the products of powerful individuals or group of individuals such as the media or the State etc. The 'empowered subject' or 'collective action' does not necessarily lie at the centre of our network of power. Explanations of the social condition have therefore to make space for the 'other'. What constitutes the 'other' and the forms of power associated with is a complex area but it means we need to consider the role placed by historical happen chance, accidents and 'events' which shape, form and sometimes determine the impact of a particular discursive milieu.

"The human is no longer the experiential center of a course of action which he encounter and oversees, but the arbitrary effect of a network of events out of which he can no longer make sense."(Honneth 1997 p.112)